

Appln. No.: 09/373,230
Amdt. dated March 8, 2005
Reply to Office Action of September 9, 2004

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 (Currently amended). An IFN- γ production inducing agent which consists essentially of an effective ingredient capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells, said effective ingredient being an interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, having the following physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8 \pm 1.0 on chromatofocusing; [[and]]

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- γ production by immunocompetent cells, and activating the cytotoxicity of killer cells, where the activation is augmented by interleukin 2;

(4) Purity

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Exhibiting a single protein band when
electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate
polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE); and

(5) Assay

Being detected with a monoclonal antibody which
binds to the interferon- γ inducing polypeptide
having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

2 (Currently amended). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and an effective ingredient capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells, said effective ingredient being an interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, having the following physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8 \pm 1.0 on chromatofocusing; and

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- γ production by immunocompetent cells, and activating the

cytotoxicity of killer cells, where the activation
is augmented by interleukin 2;

(4) Purity

Exhibiting a single protein band when
electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate
polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE); and

(5) Assay

Being detected with a monoclonal antibody which
binds to the interferon- γ inducing polypeptide
having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

3 (Currently amended). A purified interferon-gamma
(IFN- γ) production inducing protein, which is a variant of an
interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known
as IGIF and IL-18, and which has the following physicochemical
properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium
dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
(SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8 \pm 1.0 on chromatofocusing;

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- γ production by
immunocompetent cells, and activating the
cytotoxicity of killer cells, where the activation
is augmented by interleukin 2; [[and]]

(4) Partial amino acid sequence

Possessing a part or the whole of the amino acid
sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa in SEQ ID
NO:2 is Met or Thr,

(5) Purity

Exhibiting a single protein band when
electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate
polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE); and

(6) Assay

Being detected with a monoclonal antibody which
binds to the interferon- γ inducing polypeptide
having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2,

wherein said variant is a sequence variant of SEQ ID NO:2 which
corresponds to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, which is
obtainable by replacing at least one amino acid residue in SEQ ID
NO:2 with a different amino acid residue or by deleting or adding
at least one amino acid residue in SEQ ID NO:2 or to the N-
terminus of SEQ ID NO:2 while not substantially altering the
above biological activity (3).

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4(Previously presented). The purified protein according to claim 3, wherein said variant has at least one amino acid residue in SEQ ID NO:2 replaced with a different amino acid residue.

5(Previously presented). The purified protein according to claim 3, wherein said variant has at least one amino acid residue deleted or added to the N-terminus of SEQ ID NO:2.

6(Previously presented). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the protein of claim 3.

7(Previously presented). A purified interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, where Xaa represents methionine or threonine.

8(Previously presented). An interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing agent which consists essentially of, as an effective ingredient, the protein of claim 7.

9(Original). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the protein of claim 7.

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Claim 10 (Cancelled)

11(Currently amended). A purified interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which has the following physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8 \pm 1.0 on chromatofocusing;

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- γ production by immunocompetent cells, and activating the cytotoxicity of killer cells, where the activation of cytotoxicity of killer cells being augmented by interleukin-2; [[and]]

(4) Partial amino acid sequence

Possessing a part or the whole of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr,

(5) Purity

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Exhibiting a single protein band when
electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate
polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE); and

(6) Assay

Being detected with a monoclonal antibody which
binds to the interferon- γ inducing polypeptide
having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2,

and which reacts with a monoclonal antibody specific to an
interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein having the
amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 or a sequence variant of the
protein having one or more of the antigenic fragments of the
amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 while not substantially
altering the above biological activity (3).

Claims 12 and 13 (Cancelled)

14 (Previously presented). A purified interferon-gamma
(IFN- γ) production inducing protein capable of inducing
interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production by immunocompetent cells,
wherein said protein is encoded by a DNA sequence which
hybridizes to an oligonucleotide probe of SEQ ID NO:5 under the
hybridization conditions of 5 x SSPE, 5 x Denhardt's solution,
0.5 w/v% SDS, 100 μ g/ml denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 45°C and
after being washed with 6 x SSC.

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15 (Cancelled).

16(Previously presented). An isolated interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which substantially retains its interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing activity even after treatment with SDS-PAGE.

17(Cancelled).